

## A DECADE IN OUR HISTORY

1832-'42 Constituted One of the  
Most Important Periods in  
the History of North  
Carolina.



ANDREW JACKSON became President of the United States in 1829, and introduced a new Epoch in American history. In the dawn of this new Epoch, the decade 1832-'42 constituted one of the most interesting periods in the history of North Carolina.

### Social and Industrial Conditions.

North Carolina was not settled by colonies, but by individuals who located along the streams navigable by the small boats of the period, upon widely separated plantations and only pressed inland as the choice land along the streams was occupied. These soon developed two fixed principles: The Spirit of Democracy, The Dignity of Land-holding. As balancing influences these produced a sound conservatism which has marked every period of the State's history and must be taken into account in every study of its institutions.

The distinctively aristocratic element was not large. "We always had (says Dr. Wiley) an educated class, numbering men and women of the highest type for virtue, intelligence, patriotism and public spirit."

Dr. Bassett says of a larger class: "They were usually self-made men, of fair intelligence and of some education. They were generally thrifty and often wealthy. The majority of them were Christians, mostly of the Methodist, Baptist or Presbyterian churches. There was little that was ideal about them. They were humdrum, but they were honest, pious and substantial, and they were numerous." He might have added that they were brave, constant, industrious and hospitable.

Agriculture was the employment of all classes. Tools and implements were rude and often clumsy, but were made in shops on the plantation. In fact there were few necessities of daily life not made at home. Woolen, linen and cotton goods were manufactured for master and slave. Hats and shoes, even plows, hoes and nails were of domestic manufacture. Such work was usually done by negro slaves. It was a case of Hobson's choice, owing to the lack of transportation and the cost of marketing products and procuring supplies. The primitive cotton gins operated by horse-power turned out about two bales of cotton per day and were found upon nearly every large farm. The State produced ten million pounds of cotton in 1833 and about 52,000,000 pounds in 1839. Tobacco in hogsheads with shafts attached was rolled to market, usually Petersburg. This tobacco was sun cured and was worth about five cents per pound. Twenty-three hundred hogsheads were carried to the new tobacco market at Henderson in 1840, which indicates in some measure the extent of the inconveniences our planters had suffered for want of transportation.

In 1810 North Carolina produced double as many yards of cotton and woolen fabrics as Massachusetts, but the factories disappeared just after the War of 1812. One was established at the Falls of Tar River in 1818, and one near Lincolnton in 1822. In 1838, however, they had begun to spring up rapidly and were then to be found at Mocksville, Greensboro, Fayetteville, Lexington, Salem, Milton and in the counties of Orange and Randolph. A number of others were projected and started about this time. In 1840 the number of persons engaged in manufactures and trade was 14,322; in agriculture 217,095.

The mining interests were principally confined to gold. Several small iron furnaces and forges were in operation in a small way, but with the spread of railroads they were abandoned, being unable to compete with the cheaper products of the well equipped plants of the North. "As a rule, the mines consisted of simple, but numberless, pits and cuts, along the outcrops of the ore bodies, which were abandoned when they attained too great a depth, and others opened."

The gold-producing States of the Union were Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama. The total product, 1832-'34, was \$2,444,000, of which North Carolina furnished \$1,313,000, more than half. The benefits arising from this mining had diffused themselves among every class in the community. The banks in particular had been "enabled to procure funds and a redeeming capital, which had the ability to sustain their currency."

The establishment of a Branch Mint of the United States at Charlotte for the coining of gold, which went into operation in 1836, greatly stimulated

gold mining, but does not appear to have been a profitable investment for the Government. One writer declares that "the cost of coining at the branch mints has been twenty-eight cents and three mills for each dollar." Another states that there were 30,000 persons engaged in gold-mining in this State in March, 1842. The amount of North Carolina gold coined at the Philadelphia Mint up to 1833 was \$2,648,500; at Charlotte there was coined in 1838, \$80,565, and in 1839, \$162,727.

There were no large towns in the State. The population of the four largest ones was:

	1830.	1840.
New Bern .....	3796	3696
Fayetteville .....	2863	4285
Wilmington .....	2633 (1820)	4744
Raleigh .....	1700	2244

At the opening of the decade there was no "cheap and easy access to a good market." The profits of agriculture were absorbed in the cost of marketing its products. There was no employment outside of agriculture, and even Mr. Macon doubted the capacity of North Carolina to become a great Commercial State. Under these circumstances Emigration became very active. A Legislative Committee in 1833 spoke of the "tide of emigration which never ebbs." The same report declares "that the lands of nine-tenths of the farmers of the State are actually in the market," on this account. Governor Swain alludes to it as "The continually increasing current of emigration, which is depriving us of many of our most intelligent and enterprising citizens."

This movement was generally credited to the depressed agricultural interests incident to deficient transportation, but Governor Speight thought the sales of public lands was the cause and called attention to a like experience in South Carolina. The fact that Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina each increased in population only about two and one-third per cent from 1830 to 1840, gives color to Governor Spaight's theory, and is conclusive that more than merely local causes contributed to the result.

Whatever the cause, the condition was serious and it is pleasing to our State pride to recall that the public men of that day proved equal to the task of dealing with it.

### Slavery.

Slavery had played an important part in the industrial and social life of the State. Only Virginia and South Carolina had a larger number of slaves. Their respective holdings in 1840, were, Virginia 469,757; South Carolina, 315,401; North Carolina, 245,601. Those in our State with 22,732 free-negroes, constituted one-third of the total population with a clear majority in some eastern counties.

The Nat Turner insurrection in Southampton, Virginia, August, 1831, hardened the condition of slaves and free-negroes at the beginning of the decade. "It was believed in North Carolina that the insurrection commenced with and was arranged by four negro preachers, who had been permitted to hold their meetings by day and by night and who used these opportunities to poison the minds of the slaves. Of these preachers the principal was Nat Turner who claimed to be commissioned by Jesus Christ."

This bloody affair produced intense excitement in North Carolina. Laws were passed greatly abridging the privileges of the slaves and free-negroes, these latter being supposed to exercise a dangerous influence upon the slaves. They were forbidden to preach or exhort in public or in any manner to officiate as preacher or teacher where there were slaves of different families. Free-negroes were not to hawk or peddle without license from the Court of Common Pleas, with seven justices present. None were permitted to teach "any other slaves to read or write." These and other restraints upon the liberty of employment, travel and residence were some of the new aspects of slavery introduced at the beginning of our decade, which tended to interrupt the kindly relations between the races and increased the burden and difficulty of both. The amended constitution of 1835 deprived free-negroes of the right to vote.

The sentiment in North Carolina was by no means unanimous in favor of slavery, and had not been. The legislature of North Carolina, in 1804, appears to have been the first to propose an amendment to the constitution of the United States prohibiting the slave trade. A manumission society existed as late as 1834, principally in Guilford and Randolph counties. Many prominent men, like Jo Gales, of the Raleigh Register, wished an end to slavery, to be brought about by gradual means. The most notable expression of anti-slavery sentiment from this State, was the vote in Congress, in 1836, by Lewis Williams, Representative from the Surry district, against the admission of Arkansas upon the sole ground that its constitution recognized slavery.

In 1833 the American Anti-Slavery Society was formed. Its program demanded "the immediate and total abolition of slavery throughout the country, laws and constitutions to the contrary notwithstanding." Incendiary publications were scattered through the country, causing indignation and much apprehension. A Joint Select Committee of 26 on the Subject of

Abolition considered this matter and made report to the Legislature in 1835, earnestly protesting against such outside interference, declaring it both dangerous and unlawful.

The matter became a troublesome one in Congress. Nearly every Senator and Representative from North Carolina who spoke at all participated in these debates.

The better side of slavery is not shown in the records. As a rule the personal relations between the owners and the slaves were not only kind but affectionate. In the old family letters of that period the slaves are mentioned by name and their health and family concerns are spoken of as having a personal interest.

The slave-trader was held in loathing and contempt, and there was social ostracism for men known to be cruel to their slaves. These are matters of common tradition. The sublime loyalty of the slaves during the war and the warm affection by old negroes towards the families of their former owners, which yet subsists, prove more strongly than records that however hard the system may have been, in North Carolina at least, its operations were neither harsh nor oppressive.

### Militia.

The people of North Carolina were never free from the apprehension of slave insurrection, and the maintenance of the militia was regarded as important. The Report of Adjutant-General Bev. Daniel shows an organization embracing 9 Major-Generals and 19 Brigadiers.

The Militia was composed of Infantry 66,279, Riflemen 1,162, Cavalry 733, Artillery 214. Total, 68,388. The State had seven cannon—one 4-pounder and six 6-pounders. There were various military companies and two arsenals—one at Raleigh and one at Fayetteville.

In 1840, Robert W. Haywood had become Adjutant-General. All free white men and white apprentices citizens of this State, or of the United States residing in this State, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, were required to be enrolled in the militia, and to arm themselves.

### The Capitol.

The old Capitol was burned June 21, 1831. A more serious loss was the destruction of Canova's great Statue of Washington which was in the rotunda of the building. Duncan Cameron, W. S. Moon and Henry Seawell were appointed Commissioners to rebuild the Capitol. These gentlemen and their successors did the State a permanent service by steadily adhering to the purpose of having the new building conform to the best architectural forms. From a statement furnished by Mr. Paton, the supervising architect, we extract the following:

"The columns and entablature are Grecian Doric, and copied from the temple of Minerva, commonly called the Parthenon, which was erected in Athens about 500 years before Christ. An octagon tower surrounds the rotunda, which is ornamented with Grecian cornice, &c., and its dome is decorated at top with a similar ornament to that of the Charagis Monument of Lysicrates, commonly called the Lantern of Demosthenes. . . . The vestibules are decorated with columns and antae, similar to that of the Ionic Temple on the Ilissus near the Acropolis of Athens. The remainder is groined with stone and brick, springing from columns and pilasters of Roman Doric. . . . The lobbies and Hall of Representatives have their columns and antae of the octagon Tower at Andronicus Cyrrhestes, and the plan of the hall is of the formation of the Greek theatre—and the columns and antae in the Senatorial chamber and rotunda are of the temple of Erectheus, Minerva, Polias and Pandrosus in the Acropolis of Athens, near the above-named Parthenon." The legislative halls were prepared for use in 1838, and the commissioners made their final report in 1840. As finally constituted the commission consisted of Dr. John Beckwith, Rev. Dr. Wm. McPheeters and Mr. W. R. Gales. All commissioners had served without compensation. They say of the building in their final report: "In the Capitol just erected, the State possesses a building which, for solidity and beauty of material, uniform faithfulness of execution and for architectural design, is not surpassed, if, indeed, equalled by any building in the Union. Upon it the eye of every stranger rests with delight and admiration, and his tongue breaks forth in spontaneous expressions of applause; and to North Carolinians it will remain for centuries, an object of just and becoming pride, as a noble monument of the taste and liberality of the present generation." Its total cost was \$530,684.15.

### The Washington Statue.

Mr. Ball Hughes proposed to restore the statue of Washington for \$5,000. The Legislature authorized a contract to that effect and Mr. Hughes entered upon the work, but seems to have abandoned it in July, 1832, after receiving \$2,800 of the contract price. A later effort was made in the same direction but without result, and the great work of art seemed to be permanently lost.

### Churches.

The restless spirit of the period reaching out into the larger field of action was also manifest in the religious life of the churches. The Episcopal and Presbyterian churches

had formed their State organizations some years previously, and aside from the Episcopalian school which afterwards grew into St. Mary's, and the founding of Davidson College by the Presbyterians, they present few special movements.

Among Baptists the tendency towards more perfect co-operation of the churches had been opposed by a very respectable element who characterized the advanced movements as "Institutions of the day." A division resulted in 1827. The reactionists finally settled upon the name Primitive Baptists, and the more progressive majority became known as Missionary Baptists. About a dozen men of the latter met at Greenville in 1830, and organized the Baptist State Convention. Their great work of the decade was to bring the churches throughout the State into co-operation with this body and its enterprises. A great three years' canvass was undertaken by Rev. Samuel Wait. Information for the people and education for the preachers were found to be pressing needs. Dr. Wait was quick to grasp the situation. The Biblical Recorder was established as the denominational organ; Wake Forest was established as the denominational college; a Board of Missions was created to direct and prosecute missionary operations throughout the State. These enterprises unified the denomination and laid the foundation for its subsequent prosperity.

The Methodists also experienced some differences over the Episcopacy. A considerable element wished to infuse more of Democracy into the church government. Rather sharp discipline was administered to the Reformers, which led to the organization of the Methodist Protestant church about 1827, since grown into an important factor in the religious life of the State. The Methodist churches were at that time in the Virginia Conference, and were set off into a new conference in 1837. Its first session was held in Greensboro in January, 1838. In 1840, there were 16,090 white members. Its most important enterprise was the Greensboro Female College. Trustees for this were appointed at the Virginia Conference in 1837, but its planting and growth were under the administration of the North Carolina Conference.

Salem Female Academy under the Moravians, continued to prosper as the leading institution for young women in the State, possibly the best in the South.

T. M. PITTMAN.

Henderson, N. C.  
(To be Continued.)

(Note: A few years ago General Julian S. Carr, as an encouragement to the study of North Carolina History, offered a prize of \$100 for the best essay on any decade in the history of North Carolina. Several contestants entered the competition, among them being Mr. Thomas M. Pittman, of Henderson, to whom the judges awarded the prize. Mr. Pittman selected for his work the decade from 1832 to 1842, and prepared a most excellent history of that interesting period. The Review is fortunate in being able to present to its readers this essay, which will be printed in three parts, beginning with this issue.)



### WHY THEY FELL OUT.

The Tarboro Southerner prints an excellent sketch of Thomas H. Hall, of Edgecombe, long time congressman and friend of John Randolph, of Roanoke, and the Southerner adds this story:

"At one election, Peter Hines, a man of much influence as well as prominence in the county and whose biography Dr. W. P. Mercer should look up and have the Southerner publish, ran against Mr. Hall, who signally defeated him, but Mr. Hines took his political discomfort so much to heart, he would not speak to his successful opponent.

"This caused Mr. Hall to indulge in poetry, probably taken from the other Hall, that Mr. Lichtenstein mentions.

"We get this from John D. Battle, a raconteur, without an equal, who says he only quotes from his father, the grand old man of Edgecombe, W. S. Battle:

"Hines and Hall they both fell out,  
And what d'ye think it was about  
Hall was in and Hines was out,  
And that's what they fell out about."

"For same reason people to this day are still falling out.

"Hines defeated Dr. Hall in 1824 for Congress, but met defeat in 1826."



### KENTUCKY IN THE NATION'S HISTORY.

Professor Robert N. McElroy, of Princeton University, has recently written a new history of Kentucky, which has just been published by Moffat, Yard and Company. It is a distinct contribution to the history of the State, and this is in no small part due to the fact that the author has treated the subject in connection with the larger and more important history of the nation. This is not at all usual in a State history but it is a plan that commends itself.

A more extended review will appear next month.